Theresienstadt

Ger.: Theresienstadt). A garrison town in northern Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic), the site of a ghetto constructed by the Nazis for Czech Jews before they were transported to extermination camps in the eastern occupied territories. Terezín, emptied of its original inhabitants, was set up as a ‘temporary holding camp’ in 1941 by Adolf Eichmann and Reinhold Heydrich , with the tragic collusion of members of the former Socialist-Zionist party, who were misled into thinking that the gathering of Czech Jews into one ghetto would prevent further and more intense persecution. Many of those interned there were members of the artistic and intellectual community of Prague, including a number of composers as well as musicians from the National Theatre in Prague. The Nazis allowed a certain amount of autonomy in Terezín for reasons of propaganda. The so-called ‘model ghetto’ became the subject of a film, *Hitler Gives a Town to the Jews*, and in 1944 an elaborate show of fair treatment was enacted in Terezín on the occasion of a visit by the International Red Cross. Both were intended to present a misleading account of the Nazi anti-Semitism and to deflect international suspicion from the Final Solution.